

About Community

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Office of Community Development

Providing financial and technical resources to build livable and sustainable communities

Contents

- 2 eNCOMPASS —
New Program for
Capital Facilities
Planning
- 3 Recap of 2001
Legislative Session
- 6 Outstanding
Employees
- 8 Weatherizing
Homes Saves
Energy, Helps Low-
Income Families

People & Communities

By Busse Nutley, Director

Office of Community Development

Many of Washington's residents and communities, especially those outside the Puget Sound region, have been hit by a series of blows. Prices for farm products have been declining dramatically, the drought has raised serious concerns for industries and farmers, energy-intensive businesses have closed and laid off workers, and the demand for local services is rising while revenues are falling.

The communities affected by these conditions are among those we serve. Much of the federal and state money we distribute goes to them, and they are the ones we help the most with planning, training, grant-writing, and dealing with regulations.

Over the past several months, as I have sat on some of the cabinet-level groups that are addressing the drought and other problems, it occurred to me that none of them was directly addressing the problems of people and communities. One group is focused primarily on

water needs, another on energy, and another on economic vitality.

Their efforts could generate some positive results, but what if they are not enough? What if new jobs don't come? Or farm prices stay low? Or, despite water transfers, many farmers still don't have enough, what then? If the drought and other conditions persist, what should be our plan for obtaining more assistance? How much more will we need for emergency food, housing, or low-income assistance with heating bills?

My staff and I discussed these concerns with Paul Isaki, the Governor's Chief of Staff. Last week he convened a work group that will focus specifically on the cumulative effects these problems have on people and communities. He has asked me to chair the group.

Ten state agencies will participate, plus the Governor's Office and representatives of local government, including:

- Department of Agriculture
- Office of Community Development

Please turn to page 2

About Community



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People & Communities

Continued from page 1

- Department of Ecology
- Department of Employment Security
- Department of Health
- Commission on Hispanic Affairs
- Office of Indian Affairs
- Department of Revenue
- Department of Social and Health Services
- Office of Trade and Economic Development
- Governor's Policy Office
- Association of Washington Cities
- Washington State Association of Counties
- Washington State University, IMPACT Center

The group will have three primary assignments:

- Collect information and coordinate the state's response to the effects of drought, energy prices, and agricultural decline on people and communities.
- Prepare for the 2002 Legislative session.
- Determine the state's role in developing and implementing long-term strategies to deal with the larger array of issues affecting rural communities.

In a nutshell, I see the job of this group being to do what the state can do to help people and rural communities

weather these difficult and changing conditions. OCD will work closely with our network of partners and contractors – the many nonprofits and local governments that deliver services in communities.

eNCOMPASS — New Program for Capital Facilities Planning

Newly developed computer templates and macros, based on Microsoft Excel 97, may make it easier for cities, counties, ports, and special purpose districts to prepare their annual plans for streets, bridges, sewers, and the like. The new approach could also save money and staff time.

The program, called eNCOMPASS, helps planners, accountants, and engineers collaborate on capital facilities planning. It includes templates for all phases of planning, including public participation, project management, and financing. Other features tie the templates together and make them easier to use.

eNCOMPASS was developed by Alice Soulek, Capital Facilities Planning Coordinator with the City of Olympia. Alice will work with the Growth Management Unit and four to six local governments to test the program during next year's planning cycle. Testers will receive

Please turn to page 8

Recap of 2001 Legislative Session

Governor's Request Bills

Mobile Home Relocation Assistance (SSB 5354)

This bill would have created a permanent funding source for the Mobile Home Relocation Assistance fund. The fund helps eligible owners of homes in parks relocate when their park closes and has enough money left to assist 12-14 families. The bill did not pass and the mechanism proposed in the bill had several flaws. But the agency and stakeholders made good progress on an agreement for a new funding mechanism, and the agency will pursue legislation in the next session. For more information, please call Teri Ramsauer at (360) 725-2960.

Monitoring Sex Offenders (SHB 2086)

This bill strengthens state law to meet the national standard for lifetime registration of sex offenders. States that do not meet the national standard could lose 10 percent of their federal Byrne Formula Grant funds for criminal justice programs, starting in 2003. The Safe and Drug Free Unit will now send a "status update on State legislation" to the U. S. Department of Justice, describing the new legislation. For more information, please

call Paul Perz at (360) 725-3025.

Housing Fee Bill (SSB 5936)

This bill would have added an additional \$3.00 to the recording fee people pay when they record property sale documents with a county auditor. The revenue generated would have been split between the state and the county and cities located within the county where the revenue was collected. Proceeds would have supported low-income housing projects. The bill passed the Senate but died in the House. Because housing was a new topic for the Local Government Committee, one of the committee co-chairs preferred to work on housing issues during the interim. For more information, please call Ray Price at (360) 725-2912.

Building Code Council Fee (SB 5352)

This bill would have increased the fee on a building permit from \$4.50 to \$6.00. It passed the Senate but did not move in the House, for the same reason cited for the Housing Fee Bill. For more information, please call Tim Nogler at (360) 725-2969.

Community Mobilization Program (SB 5367)

This bill changes the formula for distributing funds to

communities to reduce violence and alcohol and substance abuse. All grants will now be distributed based on population. Previously the program had provided two types of grants, one based on population, the other on competition. The competitive grant method increased paperwork and was no longer useful. For more information, please call Paul Perz at (360) 725-3025.

Developmental Disabilities Ombudsman (SSB 5473)

The proposal was to create an ombudsman specifically for people with developmental disabilities. The ombudsman would investigate complaints and attempt to resolve them. This bill passed out of the policy committee in the Senate, but died in Senate Ways and Means. This proposal needed new General Fund-State money and many agency requests that depended on new General Fund-State funding did not succeed. For more information, please call Ed Holen at (360) 725-2873.

Developmental Disabilities Endowment Fund (SB 6081)

The bill sought technical cleanups in the statute and authority for the agency to charge administrative fees. Reasonable progress was

Please turn to next page

Recap of 2001 Legislative Session

made educating legislators about the intricacies of the Endowment Fund, the management of special needs trusts, and the importance of the fund to the well-being of people with developmental disabilities. The bill did not pass, but the Legislature did provide some General Fund assistance within the budget and allowed the agency to charge clients for some administrative costs. For more information, please call Jeanne-Marie Thomas at (360) 725-2862.

Split the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (SSB 5370/SHB 1474)

The proposal to split the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development did not pass. The Governor will pursue this proposal again in the next session. In the meantime, the Office of Community Development and the Office of Trade and Economic will continue to function administratively as two separate agencies. No changes in program delivery are anticipated at this time. For more information, please call Scott Merriman, (360) 725-2806.

Archaeological Sites (SSB 5353/SHB1189)

This bill would have authorized the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation to issue civil penalties when

a party failed to obtain a permit for excavation of an archaeological site or violated the conditions of a permit. The bill did not pass, but the agency worked with interested and affected parties to clarify the bill and will pursue legislation in the next session. The Legislature, however, did provide new General Fund dollars to the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation to make more site visits to help parties protect archaeological resources and comply with the statute. For more information, please call Allyson Brooks, (360) 407-0826.

Other Bills of Interest to OCD Programs

SSB 5197, Bond Cap, changes the formula for allocation of private activity bond capacity. Last summer, Senators Shirley Winsley and Margarita Prentice convened stakeholders, who then negotiated the proposed changes. The Office of Community Development facilitated the negotiations.

HB 2222, Providing Funding for Emergent Needs, appropriates \$1 million from the Emergency Reserve Fund and \$4 million from federal funds to the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development for energy assistance.

SHB 1000, Managing Capital Facility Projects by the Public Works Board, expands the definition of “public works project” to develop a broader base of information for the development of capital facilities plans. It also increases the percentage of the Public Works Assistance Account that can be used for emergency loans, preconstruction loans, and loans for capital facilities planning. It also deletes the transfer of funds from the Public Works Assistance Account to the Flood Control Assistance Account, which was authorized during the 1995-97 biennium.

SHB 1001, Authorizing Projects Recommended by the Public Works Board, approves the 2001 list of local government infrastructure projects funded under the Public Works Trust Fund Program, which includes 46 projects totaling \$73.5 million. It also appropriates an additional \$93.6 million for 27 supplemental projects recommended by the Public Works Board.

ESSB 5703, Mobile/Manufactured Home Alterations, directs the Department of Labor and Industries to adopt rules for permits for alteration of installed manufactured homes. It creates a Joint Legislative Task Force to review the regulation of

Continued on page 5

Recap of 2001 Legislative Session

manufactured and mobile homes with recommendations reported by January 1, 2002.

ESSB 5017, Restricting the Sale of Ephedrine, Pseudoephedrine, or Phenylpropanolamine, requires any person who transfers or receives certain drugs that are precursors to the manufacture of methamphetamine to obtain a permit from the State Board of Pharmacy. This bill is part of the effort to reduce the proliferation of methamphetamine labs.

ESHB 1997, Revising Provisions Relating to Industrial Land Banks, allows counties meeting the certain population, geographic, and unemployment criteria to establish a process for designating a land bank of no more than two master-planned locations for major industrial activity outside urban growth areas.

EHB 2247, Managing Energy Supply and Demand, raises several thresholds for jurisdiction of the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC). The threshold for stationary thermal power plants increases from 250 megawatts to 350 megawatts. The threshold for floating thermal power plants increases from 50 megawatts to 100 megawatts. The bill also allows any power plant using alternative energy resources to seek certification through

EFSEC and changes mandatory membership of council and status of council chair.

The bill also provides a credit against the public utility tax (1) for utilities that offer new billing discounts to low-income customers and (2) for utilities that contribute to agencies that administer the federal low-income energy assistance program.

ESHB 1418, Promoting Community Revitalization, authorizes a new system of property tax increment financing. A county, city, town, or port district may designate a tax increment area within which a portion

of property tax receipts can be used to finance capital facilities or public improvements.

Extending Deadline for Local Government Compliance with Growth Management Act and Shoreline Management Act: No bill passed that would have extended the deadlines for compliance with the Shoreline Management Act or Growth Management Act. For more information, please call Steve Wells, (360) 725-3003.

Operating Budget

The legislature appropriated \$354,242,000 in total funds for the operating budget. Several agency programs received increased funding over previous budget levels:

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Protection of Archaeological Sites | \$266,000 |
| Growth Management Updates | \$3,000,000 |
| Emergency Food | \$1,000,000 |
| Developmental Disabilities Endowment Fund | \$460,000 |
| Technology Improvements | \$200,000 |
| Youth Shelters | \$240,000 |
| A demonstration project on affordable housing projects for low- and moderate-income families | \$680,000 |

Capital Budget

The Capital Budget appropriated \$370,348,367 for several programs, including:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Housing Assistance | \$78,000,000 |
| Public Works Trust Fund | \$256,000,000 |
| Community Service Facilities Program | \$4,411,000 |
| Buildings for the Arts Program | \$3,850,000 |
| Community-Specific Appropriations | \$15,162,000 |

For more information, call Bob Liston, (360) 725-2710.

Outstanding Employees

The Office of Community Development's reputation for innovation and getting things done is apparent in the performances of the first winners in the agency's new employee recognition program.

Special/Outstanding Group



LIHEAP team members, from left: Will Graham, Bill Wildprett, OCD Director Busse Nutley, Cinque Finnie, and Bruce Yasutake.

Bravo!

The **SPECIAL/OUTSTANDING GROUP AWARD** was presented to the team that administers the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Will Graham, Bill Wildprett, Bruce Yasutake, and Cinque Finnie administer federal and state funding that helps low-income households pay their heating bills. The LIHEAP team is gaining a reputation as one of the most innovative in state government. Its

innovations have occurred not because of directives from the Legislature or federal agencies, but through the initiative of its members.

LIHEAP's Web site, for example, shows how the team is simplifying the program. The interactive site is partially secured for use by the 29 nonprofit contractors that distribute funds, the public, and staff. On one Web page a viewer can calculate

the size of the energy assistance benefit right on the screen. On another, by clicking on a map, viewers can identify the closest office where they can apply for assistance. Another page handles federal paperwork. All this is done in collaboration with LIHEAP contractors. (Please see the Winter 2001 issue of *About Community* for more information about LIHEAP.)

More employee awards on page 7

Outstanding Employees

The Office of Community Development's Employee Recognition

Employee of the Quarter



**Employee of the Quarter Cathi Read with
OCD Director Busse Nutley.**

Thanks!

The first winner of the agency's **EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER AWARD** is Cathi Read. Cathi helps small communities comply with environmental regulations and plan for their future. She does this by building working relationships between communities and regulatory agencies.

To cite one example: through her hard work, including many late night

meetings, Cathi helped the Town of Tieton and the Cowiche Sewer District develop a regional wastewater treatment facility that will save the state \$1.2 million in construction costs.

Cathi's work has contributed in the broadest possible way to the community development needs of communities like McCleary, Lyman, and Cathlamet. As Brian Shay,

City of McCleary puts it, "Without Cathi's assistance we would not have a planning commission, we would not have put on presentations to our community about our water and sewer systems, and we would not be having the types of open discussions—brainstorming sessions—where good ideas and solutions to our problems are clearly identified."

Weatherizing Homes Saves Energy, Helps Low-Income Families

Oak Ridge National Laboratories recently issued an evaluation of Washington State's program for making older homes more energy efficient. Evaluators found that, on average, the Office of Community Development's Low-Income Weatherization Program reduces energy use for heating by 19 percent in electrically heated homes and by 30 percent in gas-heated homes.

Many low-income families live in older homes that are harder to heat than dwellings that meet modern energy codes. And heating takes almost one-fifth of their monthly income.

The Office of Community Development's Weatherization Program works with a network of 26 local organizations – nonprofits and local governments – which then hire contractors to insulate houses, repair heating ducts, seal air leaks, and improve the efficiency of furnaces. The program weatherizes

about 5,000 homes a year, using a combination of federal, state, and local matching resources.

Other conclusions in the Oak Ridge report:

- Homes with high energy consumption are good candidates for weatherization.
- Increasing the amount spent leads to greater energy savings.
- When cost of energy and cost of weatherization are taken into account, benefit/cost ratios were greater for electrically heated homes than for gas-heated homes.

The full report is available free through the U.S. Department of Energy's Information Bridge Web site: <http://www.osti.gov/bridge>.

For more information, please call Carolyn Wyman, Weatherization Program Manager, at 360-725-2955, or send e-mail to her at carolynw@cted.wa.gov.

eNCOMPASS — New Program for Capital Facilities Planning

Continued from page 2
technical assistance and, possibly, some financial assistance.

If all goes well, eNCOMPASS will be available to other governments in 2003. For the first time, communities across the state will have standardized processes for capital facilities planning and documentation. This, in turn, will generate accurate and reliable data to help decision makers assess the status of capital facilities in Washington.

For more information, please call Alice Soulek at (360) 725-3064, or Patrick Babineau, Senior Planner, Growth Management Unit, at (360) 725-3045.